

MINUTES

**MONTANA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
58th LEGISLATURE - REGULAR SESSION**

**JOINT APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES AND
COMMERCE**

Call to Order: By **CHAIRMAN JEFF PATTISON**, on January 24, 2003 at
8 A.M., in Room 317-C Capitol.

ROLL CALL

Members Present:

Rep. Jeff Pattison, Chairman (R)
Sen. Bill Tash, Vice Chairman (R)
Sen. Edward Butcher (R)
Rep. John Musgrove (D)
Sen. Linda Nelson (D)
Rep. Rick Ripley (R)
Sen. Debbie Shea (D)

Members Excused: None.

Members Absent: None.

Staff Present: Kelly Gorin, OBPP
Gary Hamel, Legislative Branch
Elaine Olsen, Committee Secretary
Doug Schmitz, OBPP

Please Note. These are summary minutes. Testimony and discussion are paraphrased and condensed. Tape stamp refers to the information which follows.

Committee Business Summary:

Hearing & Date Posted: Overview Fish Wildlife and Parks,
1/24/2003
Executive Action: None

{Tape: 1; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 1 - 6}

Ron Aasheim, Administrator, Conservation Education Division, Department of Fish Wildlife and Parks(FWP), said the public expects to be involved in decisions made by FWP. The Conservation Education Division attempts to help the agency staff to be better communicators. The Division attempts to provide information in a format that is readily accessible and easily understood. Tasks are accomplished through cooperation with media and interest groups.

EXHIBIT(jnh15a01)

Ron Aasheim said that the "Montana Outdoors" magazine has been produced by the Department for 74 years and has about 40,000 subscribers. News releases are the most efficient means for the Division to get information to the public. Information is also available on the Department website and through 11 daily and 59 weekly newspapers. Newsletters are distributed through license agents and hunter education instructors. Brochures are produced in response to specific requests for detailed information. The Division produces an annual report summarizing FWP's projects and expenditures.

Ron Aasheim said the internet is a critical means of getting information to the public. The Division utilizes the visual media through a weekly outdoor report which reaches about 300,000 people across the state through 11 television stations. In cooperation with the Montana Stockgrowers Association(MSA), the United States Forest Service(USFS), the Bureau of Land Management(BLM), and the Montana Wildlife Federation, the Division has produced a video entitled "Landscape" which addresses open space, grazing, livestock and wildlife.

{Tape: 1; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 6 - 10}

Ron Aasheim stated that 44 Montana radio stations provide public service announcement(PSA)time. The stations report that people are requesting the type of information that the Conservation Education Division provides. The Division participates in over 300 radio talk shows a year and takes part in group banquets, annual meetings, conventions and fairs. People say they prefer to obtain the information one-on-one.

Ron Aasheim said the Division has alliances with about two dozen groups such as the Montana Woolgrowers, Montana Bowhunters' Association, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and Trout Unlimited(TU). The Division partners with TU and other groups in

the "Hooked on Fishing, Not on Drugs" program. Over 39,000 people have attended clinics, 150 schools were involved, and 250 teachers attended training sessions. Volunteer time totaled over 10,000 hours.

{Tape: 1; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 10 - 15}

Ron Aasheim said the Hunter and Bowhunter Education programs receive the greatest participation of any program the Division sponsors. Over 10,000 youngsters participate annually with interest remaining constant. Fifteen hundred volunteers donate over 65,000 hours each year. The Remedial Hunter Education Program, established by the Legislature, requires severe violators of fish and game laws to attend the course in order to regain their licenses. Volunteers work with the Division on the trapper education program, the off-highway vehicle(OHV), snowmobile and boating programs.

Ron Aasheim reported the Division is responsible for the design, printing and distribution of all the regulations for the agency. The printing is handled through the bid process with the job going to the low bidder. A three percent advantage is given to in-state businesses.

Ron Aasheim stated that the Division administers a Shooting Range Grants Program authorized by the 1989 Legislative Session. Over \$150,000 is distributed each year to over 44 communities for projects which require a local match equal to the State license dollars that are spent. The Spring Meadow Wildlife Rehabilitation Center for injured or orphaned wildlife is administered by the Division.

{Tape: 1; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 15 - 25}

SEN. TASH commented that he had hosted a "Hooked on Fishing, Not on Drugs" group on his ranch and was impressed with the enthusiasm of the participants.

CHAIRMAN PATTISON inquired if the Department would consider changing regulations to allow young pheasant hunters to shoot one hen during the season. **Ron Aasheim** said the Fish Wildlife and Parks(FWP) Commission would have to address the suggestion. In the past the public has opposed a similar regulation which allowed all hunters to shoot one hen. **REP. RIPLEY** commented that a similar allowance for youth hunters might apply to big game regulations.

SEN. TASH commented that allowing youth to take antlerless game might be coordinated with wildlife management goals.

{Tape: 1; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 25 - 30}

Ron Aasheim presented the decision packages(DP) specific to the Conservation Education Division.

DP803

Ron Aasheim said DP803 was a request for \$20,000 annually to replace worn out video equipment. Congress has mandated through the Federal Communication Commission(FCC)that all television stations must change to digital broadcasting. The Division's equipment does not meet that standard.

DP804, DP805

Ron Aasheim said that DP804 and DP805 have been combined to address funding of Shooting Range Grants.

{Tape: 1; Side: B; Approx. Time Counter: 1 - 13}

DP806

Ron Aasheim stated that DP806 would fund personal services that have gone unfunded as a result of the alternative pay plan.

DP807

Ron Aasheim said that the federal contribution to hunter education has increased by \$80,000 annually. The funds must be used to enhance rather than maintain the program. Volunteer instructor hours are used to match the federal funds. Plans include the inclusion of orienteering, survival, and shooting simulation into the program.

CHAIRMAN PATTISON asked for clarification on the appropriations requested in DP804 and DP805. **Gary Hamel** said that \$16,807 was the amount spent in the base year, and it now shows in the base for the budget in FY04 and FY05. FWP is not requesting that amount as additional funding, so they are reducing the budget by that amount in the second year of the budget. The appropriation request is for the difference which would bring the total to \$160,000 in General License dollars.

DP808

Ron Aasheim said that DP808 addresses \$7,800 for the biennium for the internal service rate adjustments for vehicle expenses.

DP7809

Ron Aasheim said that DP7809 is a reduction in General Fund in the OHV program.

DP801

Ron Aasheim said DP801 was a request for \$50,000 in legislative contract authority(LCA) to utilize federal dollars as they come available.

CHAIRMAN PATTISON asked for clarification on LCA. **Ron Aasheim** said that at the Spring Meadow Animal Rehabilitation Center, the USFS provides the Division with \$15,000 each year to help with the staffing. The LCA would allow the Division to spend those funds. **REP. RIPLEY** asked if the Committee would receive a report on the expenditure. **Gary Hamel** said an annual report is given to the LFD, and that he had distributed a copy to each of the Committee members.

{Tape: 1; Side: B; Approx. Time Counter: 13 - 19}

CHAIRMAN PATTISON asked about the history of state parks. **Doug Monger, Administrator, State Parks Division, FWP**, said that the State Parks Division was formed by a Legislative resolution in the late 1930s. Lewis and Clark Caverns was being operated by the Department of the Army out of Yellowstone National Park. In 1939 the Caverns were turned over to the state, and that was the first state park. The State Parks' Commission operated the Parks until 1954 when the Commission was eliminated, and the operation of the parks was transferred to the State Highway Department. In 1964 the federal government passed a \$3 million Land and Water Conservation Fund to be administered by a state recreation agency. Parks were moved to the Fish and Game Department. In 1976 the agency was renamed Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, and in 1993 the Commission name was changed in a like manner.

EXHIBIT(jnh15a02)

{Tape: 1; Side: B; Approx. Time Counter: 19 - 26}

Doug Monger said the three main functions of the Parks Division are the management of 42 state parks, maintenance of 320 fishing access sites, and the Community Recreation Program. Site management, resource protection, visitor satisfaction, and education and interpretation are the priorities for all programs. In the last five years the agency has received many positive comments about the staff and the programs rather than complaints about the facilities.

Doug Monger said the Parks Division budget is about \$5.3 million derived from 18 funding sources. The Division has 110 FTE with 93.55 FTE funded through HB2. Sixty-six of the FTE are in the Parks' Programs, 25 FTE are in the Fishing Access Program, and three FTE are dedicated to Community Recreation. **Doug Monger** stated that the State Parks Program receives 66 percent of the funding in the 18 funding sources; the Fishing Access Program receives 20 percent; and the Community Grant Program receives 14 percent.

Doug Monger said the state parks receive about \$3 million of the \$5.3 million Division budget. The economic impact of the parks is \$116 million for the state. The camping portion of the Fishing Access Program relates to \$28 million dollars to the state's economy according to a survey by the University of Montana (UM).

Doug Monger said Makoshika State Park is the largest park in the state and comprises about 11,000 acres. Granite State Park is the smallest and is made up of one building. In total, the Division operates about 33,000 acres of State parks and hosts about 1.4 million visitors.

{Tape: 2; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 1 - 10}

Doug Monger said cultural history is the number one reason people visit state parks, with visits for camping and water recreation being the second largest attraction. Campground programs are very popular. Montana residents comprise 69 percent of the parks' visitors which is an increase from the 50 percent resident visitors in 1988. Many facilities have been improved, and residents are responding positively to the upgrades.

CHAIRMAN PATTISON asked if the number of Montana residents visiting the parks will continue to increase. **Doug Monger** replied that it was difficult to predict, and with the interest in the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial, nonresident visits should increase. **CHAIRMAN PATTISON** asked if the trend nationwide was for residents to stay closer to home on vacations. **Doug Monger** said the most noticeable trend nationwide is that people tend to avoid mass transit and are traveling by car. The majority of visitors to Montana's parks are from Washington, Oregon, Minnesota, and Alberta, Canada.

REP. MUSGROVE asked about the difference in the number of visitors to state parks from 1988 to the present. **Doug Monger** replied that the number of parks has decreased from 60 in 1988 to

42 state parks now. The rate of increase in the number of visitors has been slow and steady.

{Tape: 2; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 10 - 17}

Doug Monger said that Montana is serving more parks with less staff and less money than the surrounding states. The state parks are funded by motor boat fuel tax, earned revenues, Coal Tax interest earnings, and the Accommodations Tax. At the end of this biennium, parks will have about \$350,000 in ending-fund balances. At the current level of spending, the Parks' program will show a deficit. Revenues are down with the Accommodations Tax showing the only increase. Maintenance costs are increasing, inflation continues, and the facilities are aging.

{Tape: 2; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 17 - 22}

Doug Monger said that the Division has turned some properties over to federal entities and to cities. The capital construction program has been eliminated. Interns and volunteers are used extensively. Seasons have been shortened. Several bills are in the legislature at this time that might help the funding for state parks. The Parks' Futures Committee is appointed by the Governor and is delegated to look into and investigate the policies, the operations, the maintenance and the funding of state parks.

{Tape: 2; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 22 - 30}

CHAIRMAN PATTISON asked about the rate of decline in visitors to state parks in relationship to the State divesting itself of some park's properties. **Doug Monger** said as the number of visitors declined in some parks, they increased in others. **CHAIRMAN PATTISON** summarized by saying revenues have declined while the number of visitors has remained constant, but the state is facing another drought year which will impact the number of visitors. **REP. RIPLEY** asked about how much was spent on the maintenance at fishing access sites and the expenditures from the General License account. **Gary Hamel** said he would provide that information.

{Tape: 2; Side: B; Approx. Time Counter: 1 - 7}

Doug Monger said that the Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Commission recently raised state parks' fees. The entrance fee to Yellowstone National Park is \$20 for seven days while state parks charge \$30. BLM primitive campgrounds charge \$5 per night, and the State charges \$15 for a camp site with a picnic table and a

fire ring. For the level of facilities provided, the fees Montana charges are the highest in the region.

Doug Monger said that last season 1,500 volunteers worked 47,000 hours which is equivalent to 22 FTE or about \$750,000 a year in cost savings. **SEN. SHEA** asked how the volunteer program was coordinated. **Doug Monger** said announcements go out through AAA, Good Sams Club, RV organizations, and other groups. **SEN. BUTCHER** inquired about the type of work the volunteers do. **Doug Monger** said the volunteers greet visitors and tell them the rules. They do some maintenance. They put on the evening campfire programs and staff the interpretive centers. Many of the seasonal employees are neighbors to the state parks.

Doug Monger described the student intern program which hires Montana students from Montana schools. The students are paid at a lesser rate than an employee but they do receive class credits for their work.

{Tape: 2; Side: B; Approx. Time Counter: 7 - 24}

Doug Monger gave an overview of the Fishing Access Site(FAS) program which is responsible for maintenance and repair at 320 sites across the state. Major funding comes from fishing license monies. Over 3.6 million visitors use the sites each year for camping, boating and fishing. Major maintenance tasks include latrine cleaning, garbage disposal, road grading, controlling weeds and fencing. Fees are charged where it is cost-effective to do so, and camping is allowed. Most sites are restricted to day-use only.

SEN. TASH asked if the Department constructs their own signs. **Doug Monger** said most signs are contracted through the prison.

Doug Monger said in 1987, FAS hosted about 1.4 million visitors. Last year more than 3.6 million visitors used FAS. The Department has responded to the demand by increasing the number of FAS from 266 to 320. Traditionally in Montana, fishing access was readily available. **Doug Monger** said, "If you had a hook and a worm, you could get there." With the increase in use, landowners are getting tired of the problems associated with public access and are closing off the sites.

{Tape: 2; Side: B; Approx. Time Counter: 24 - 30}

Doug Monger addressed the Community Recreation Program which is primarily concerned with distributing federal funds and some State rebate dollars to local communities. The Snowmobile

Program is funded with fuel tax and the decal fee. The OHV Program receives a small part of the gas tax plus a decal fee for terrain restoration. The National Recreation Trails Program is funded by federal tax dollars which are passed through FWP to agencies and organizations to do trail-related projects. The Land and Water Conservation Fund(LWCF) is money generated from off-shore oil leases and is passed through. The funds are generally used for local parks' projects.

{Tape: 3; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 1 - 10}

Doug Monger said he would discuss the DPs that would be proposed by the Parks Division.

DP601

Doug Monger said DP601 is a request to restore snowmobile grant authority. Funds are appropriated to the Division and are then distributed to 28 local snowmobile clubs. Because of a light snow year, not all funds were expended, and the Department is requesting the authority to expend that earmarked money.

DP602

Doug Monger said DP602 is a request for biennial funding authority to purchase snow groomers which are allocated statewide to local associations and clubs through the Snowmobile Association. The actual increase to the budget is \$34,000. In the first year of the biennium, the agency spent \$282,000 and that became the base.

CHAIRMAN PATTISON asked how much equipment the Division has on hand. **Doug Monger** said the Division operates between 15 and 18 large pieces of equipment. As new equipment is acquired, an equal amount of old equipment is utilized in other areas or is traded in. A structured replacement program is in place. **Doug Monger** confirmed for SEN.TASH that the placement of the equipment is prioritized by the number of miles of trail that are groomed.

REP. MUSGROVE asked if the Division worked with the federal programs which provide trail grooming. **Doug Monger** replied that most of the grooming is done on federal land. The federal agencies are deeply involved with the authorization which allows the local clubs to operate on the property. Used equipment is purchased and is retained for 10 to 12 years. Funding is derived primarily from snowmobile fuel tax rebate funds. The federal portion of the fuel tax is distributed to Montana through National Recreation Trail Program.

REP. RIPLEY asked if the number of trails being groomed has decreased as more land goes into conservancy holdings. **Doug Monger** said the Division worked with about 3,700 miles of trail about five years ago, and this season there are about 4,000 miles of groomed trails. **SEN. TASH** commented that in many areas of Montana the groomed trails are on a combination of both public and private lands.

{Tape: 3; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 10 - 19}

Doug Monger clarified that the grooming is done by volunteer club members who have gone through a safety training program and maintenance program. Training includes CPR and emergency medical training. Since the groomer operator training program has been initiated, the repair costs have decreased.

DP603

Doug Monger said the request is for \$58,000 in spending authority from the LWC program to retain one employee who is responsible for the administration of the program. FWP receives \$1.4 million in federal funds through HB5 for grants to local communities to do capital improvements on recreation programs. The request would fund one state employee being paid with federal dollars to manage a federal program.

SEN. BUTCHER asked about the nature of the employee-related expenses. **Doug Monger** replied that the funding requests includes personal and operations expenses. **REP. RIPLEY** asked if the funding would have to be repaid if the DP was not approved. **Doug Monger** said if the DP is not approved, there would be no employee in place to administer the funding, so the towns of Montana would not receive the federal grants. Once the funding has been spent on a local facility, that facility has to be open to the public forever. If Montana backs out of the program by not having an administrator in place, the State still has the contractual responsibility with the federal government to ensure that the public parks remain open.

SEN. TASH asked if the funding could be used for other projects besides parks such as FAS. **Doug Monger** stated that the funds can be spent for FAS and state parks, but generally the funding is intended for community recreation capital projects. **SEN. TASH** said public access was an important criterion. **Doug Monger** said the funding could not be spent for maintenance.

{Tape: 3; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 19 - 29}

DP605

Doug Monger said the request was for an adjustment to the internal service rates for vehicle mileage and maintenance.

DP606

Doug Monger stated that the Parks Division has over 140 different funding sources which have to be maintained and balanced at the end of the fiscal year. Of the \$3.3 million program budget, \$4,342 was unspent. DP606 is a request to restore the unspent balance to the base budget.

DP607

Doug Monger said the request is for \$35,000 in authority to restore the base. The funding is for modified FTE who will supervise crews from volunteer services of groups such as Montana Conservation Corps and Montana PEAK. The crews perform volunteer supervised labor such as fence building and trail maintenance.

SEN. BUTCHER asked for details on the funding for the projects.

Doug Monger stated that any costs on the projects are negotiated on a case-by-case basis. If the work is critical and the crews are in demand, the Division may pay the crews a minimal amount. That expenditure is in the base budget.

REP. RIPLEY stated that in many cases it appeared that site maintenance is adversely affected by budget reductions, yet the number of FAS continues to grow. He commented that site maintenance would appear as important as acquiring additional sites. **Doug Monger** said the premise is correct. Because the majority of the Park's Division budget is for maintenance, that is where funding cuts can be made. Many of the personnel who work on the sites are volunteers, but they do some maintenance. Fishing license dollars cannot be spent for projects that are not related to fishing programs.

SEN. TASH commented that multiple use of Department properties could enhance revenue. **Doug Monger** stated that the Division is attempting to incorporate agricultural uses on properties when it appears appropriate. State Parks now has an enterprise fund which allows for the establishment of stores which market parks-related merchandise.

{Tape: 3; Side: B; Approx. Time Counter: 1 - 11}

In response to a question from **SEN. SHEA**, **Doug Monger** said most of the products are made in Montana or have been acquired from Montana vendors.

DP7612

Doug Monger said the Division has \$276,000 of General Fund, the majority of which is expended for maintenance in Bannack State Park, Lewis and Clark Caverns and Hell Creek State Park. In the executive budget, the Division has an adjusted base of \$289,000. The DP was to be for a General Fund ending balance of \$255,000 which results in a \$22,000 unspecified increase. The Division will reduce the request by that amount.

Doug Monger said that SEN. KITZENBERG is sponsoring SB82 which would put a referendum before the voters requesting a two-mill increase on property taxes dedicated to state parks. The referendum would not go to the voters until November of 2004. SEN. KEENAN has a bill draft request, LC582, that would implement the recommendations of the State Parks' Futures Committee. The bill would place an optional \$4 fee on light vehicle license plates. Citizens with Montana vehicle license plates could enter state parks at no charge.

{Tape: 3; Side: B; Approx. Time Counter: 11 - 18}

DP604

Doug Monger said the DP addresses LCA. The Division anticipates about \$50,000 in contracts to come available over the next fiscal year. The DP would allow the Division to contract with federal agencies and offset the costs with federal money. The funding allows for consolidation of work efforts with entities such as the USFS and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

DP609

Doug Monger said this program is for 3.87 FTE and \$174,000 annually in General License money for maintenance at the 320 FAS across the state. New sites have been added, the seasons are longer, and the impacts are greater.

FUNDING SWITCH

Doug Monger said the request is for a \$8,000 per year funding switch to use federal money for maintenance in the state parks where motor boating occurs.

{Tape: 3; Side: B; Approx. Time Counter: 18 - 26}

REP. MUSGROVE asked about the funding which had been approved for the restoration and improvements at Chief Plenty Coups State Park. **Doug Monger** said the Department had not handled the appropriation in the optimum manner. Last session the Department agreed to expend the \$212,000 in State Special Revenue and \$212,000 of State Bed Tax on an accelerated program at Chief

Plenty Coups State Park. At this date, the work completed or under contract totals \$596,000. The contracts are outlined on a handout. The Director of FWP has sent a letter to the Chairman of the Crow Tribe confirming the Department's commitment to the completion of the project and assuring him that HB63 will not impact that effort.

EXHIBIT(jnh15a03)

EXHIBIT(jnh15a04)

Doug Monger said the work at the Pictograph Cave State Park is progressing and presented a summary of the status of the work. He stated, "The Department has made a financial, philosophical, and contractual promise to move forward with the work that we agreed to do."

EXHIBIT(jnh15a05)

{Tape: 3; Side: B; Approx. Time Counter: 26 - 30}

Jim Kropp, Administrator, Enforcement Division, said the Division has 102 FTE. The First Territorial Legislature in 1864 enacted one of the first fish and wildlife laws which restricted fishing to hook and pole. That law put an end to the use of dynamite for fishing. The authority for game wardens was established in 1889. The wardens present the front line in terms of preservation and protection of the state's wildlife and cultural resources.

EXHIBIT(jnh15a06)

Jim Kropp said the Division has 69 game wardens across the state's 56 counties with one captain located in each of the Department's seven regions.

{Tape: 4; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 1 - 10}

Jim Kropp said that the wardens are responsible for areas which average over 1,700 square miles. The wardens are a part of the communities and are often contacted for diverse issues related to the Department's responsibilities. Wardens are now responsible for water safety education and enforcement. Snowmobiles and OHVs are big industries for Montana and have added to the wardens' responsibilities. Wardens are involved with commercial licensing and permitting which includes responsibilities related to shooting preserves, game farms, game bird preserves and zoos. Wardens are responsible for the permitting for restricted pets such as wolves, tigers, lions and bears.

Jim Kropp said the Division completed a comprehensive warden district planning which entailed the review of each warden district. Work priorities were established. Recreational programs are becoming a larger part of each warden's responsibilities. Wardens are mandated by the legislature to keep daily records of their activities. Over 10,000 landowners are contacted each year for purposes related to Block Management, trouble with sportsmen, road management, weeds, and stream access. A lot of contacts are educational in nature.

Jim Kropp said the wardens are active in working with other enforcement and regulatory agencies such as the Highway Patrol, State Lands, the Board of Outfitters, and the USFWS.

Jim Kropp said the Division funding is 95 percent State Special with the balance from the State Recreational Boating Act and the United States Coast Guard(USCG), which is a one-to-one matching fund.

Jim Kropp said wardens make about 165,000 field contacts a year. Wardens issue an average of 50 to 60 violations annually. The Division collects about \$550,000 in fines per year. One half of the fines go into the General Fund with the other half going to the counties.

{Tape: 4; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 10 - 14}

Jim Kropp said while big game hunting activity has remained static in Montana, the interest in upland game bird hunting has increased. Commercial interest in shooting preserves and in dog training has increased. Focus on organized criminal activity has increased. Recently a Pennsylvania family was taken into custody for extensive poaching activity in the Seeley Lake area. The couple is facing up to \$150,000 in fines and jail time.

Jim Kropp stated that resident angler days have increased about 30 percent, and the nonresident angler days have increased about 60 percent. This represents an increase of about 1 million angler days in the last decade.

{Tape: 4; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 14 - 19}

Jim Kropp said public scrutiny of commercial outfitters has increased, and a cap has been put on the number of outfitters. Social conflicts have arisen because of the increase of activity on the rivers. The FWP Commission has responded with river-specific regulations. The Division has worked to establish advisory committees on several rivers. Registration of

snowmobiles and OHV has increased 37% and is still growing. Wardens are responsible for enforcing the decal regulations.

CHAIRMAN PATTISON asked how many of the registrations are first-time as opposed to renewal registrations. **Jim Kropp** said he would provide the actual numbers, but the number of registrations is increasing every year. The number of violations for registrations and other offenses has increased significantly.

Jim Kropp said people using FAS the sites expect wardens. Two methamphetamine labs have been dumped in fishing access sites in the last year.

{Tape: 4; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 19 - 24}

Jim Kropp said licensed shooting preserves for upland game birds have increased ten-fold in number since the 1990s. Wardens are required to monitor the records on the number of hunters, percentage of birds released, and the posting of boundaries. The number of zoos and menageries in the state have increased from 4 in 1990 to 22 in 2002. The wardens are responsible for the permitting, licensing and regulation of these sites.

SEN. BUTCHER asked if the Department had a concern with allowing people to breed lions, coyotes and wolves. **Jim Kropp** stated that residents are not required to tattoo wolf hybrids unless they are at least 75 percent pure wolf. Public safety issues are important. For some permits an environmental assessment(EA) and other forms of compliance are required.

{Tape: 4; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 24 - 30}

SEN. BUTCHER asked if the Department would support a ban on a the possession of wolf hybrids. **Director Hagener** said such a ban would put the Department in the position of interfering with private enterprise. While the Department is required to regulate such activities, a total ban would be difficult for the Department to initiate.

Jim Kropp addressed the personnel and funding of the Division. The State Special License funding has remained constant while the Division size has increased five percent over the same period. The Division is having trouble with recruitment and retention. Six wardens have left the Division to go to work with other law enforcement agencies.

{Tape: 4; Side: B; Approx. Time Counter: 1 - 4}

Jim Kropp reported that in 1975 the Division had 170 applicants for a position and in 2000 a nationwide advertisement resulted in 75 applicants. In 2002, 48 qualified applicants responded to an advertisement. **CHAIRMAN PATTISON** asked what the qualifications were to apply as a warden. **Jim Kropp** said an applicant has to have a four-year bachelor's degree in any biologically-related field. The Department recruits heavily out of the University System and has a warden trainee program.

SEN. TASH asked if recruitment through other law enforcement agencies could be enhanced. **Jim Kropp** said that the water-safety programs and dispatch and prosecution is done on the county level. The Division is considering changing the qualifications to allow equivalent law enforcement experience.

CHAIRMAN PATTISON said that the Committee would be touring the Spring Meadow Wildlife Rehabilitation Center on Monday. **Director Hagener** said the Committee would first tour the Custer Avenue facility to see the current facilities where some 30 live bear cubs are being cared for. The tour would continue at the Spring Meadow Animal Rehabilitation Center which is a cooperative effort with the Mikal Kellner Foundation and the USFS.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment: 12 P.M.

REP. JEFF PATTISON, Chairman

ELAINE G. OLSEN, Secretary

JP/EGO

EXHIBIT (jnh15aad)